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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 000463

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SUBJECT: EASTERN DRC NOTES - MAY 12: MAI-MAI WITHDRAWAL FROM MARCH
23 AGREEMENT

REF: KINSHASA 460

¶1. (U) The items contained in this report consist principally of spot information from various sources. This report is not exhaustive, nor can all the information contained therein be confirmed at this time.

Mai Mai Withdrawal From March 23 Agreement

¶2. (SBU) On May 4, representatives of seven North Kivu Mai-Mai groups declared they were withdrawing their fighters from the FARDC and suspending their recognition of the March 23 agreement signed with the GDRC (reftel). Their complaint was that the government has appointed only one from their ranks to the monitoring committee for the agreement.

¶3. (SBU) Comment: This might not have become a problematic issue if not for two additional factors. First, the Mai-Mai groups originally thought the committee was going to be based in Goma and not terribly significant. However, the GDRC recently called all those appointed to the committee to Kinshasa and, in Goma, the capital signifies power and opportunity. Therefore, those who were not invited suddenly saw the stakes raised with respect to this committee. Additionally, the majority of the members from North Kivu on the committee are apparently Hutus; as previously reported, many of the (non-Rwandophone) Mai-Mai have complained of preferential treatment for Rwandophones over the past several months.

¶4. (SBU) Comment continued: Collectively, the seven groups have integrated just under 2,000 fighters into the FARDC with a total of 257 weapons. They do not, therefore, represent a large portion of the newly integrated. Moreover, while the individuals who signed the declaration are certainly influential within their respective groups, they do not necessarily exercise full control. They may well be speaking primarily from their individual standpoints, perhaps not even capable of persuading their own fighters to withdraw from the integration process. For the moment, the signatories have apparently not yet carried out this threat. This drama might just be a bluff. Ideally, these groups want to be included in the new set-up, not make themselves enemies of it. Nevertheless, the integration process is still tentative, and any reverse or even just the threat thereof, is cause for concern. End Comment.

Security Situation in the Kivus and Orientale

¶5. (SBU) The LRA attacked Bofula village on the DRC-Sudan border on May 11, capturing four children. Separately, the FARDC rescued seven children from the LRA at Faradje and handed them over to

UNICEF in Dungu.

¶6. (SBU) Further to the alleged FARDC killing of four civilians near Aveba in Ituri, local FARDC commanders met with villagers to try to calm the situation. The villagers want MONUC and international NGOs to be involved in the trial of the accused soldier because they suspect the FARDC will otherwise just transfer him out of Ituri rather than prosecute him.

¶7. (SBU) On May 9, the FDLR burnt 31 houses at Butalongola, ten kilometers southwest of Kanyabayonga in North Kivu. The FARDC has deployed two platoons to the village.

¶8. (SBU) Allegedly, 400 FDLR fighters want to surrender at Kalehe in South Kivu, and a DRRR team is on its way to process them (Comment: We would not be surprised if these numbers turn out to be vastly inflated. End Comment). Additionally, four FDLR fighters have surrendered to MONUC at Shabunda.

¶9. (SBU) On May 9, the FARDC killed a civilian three kilometers north of Kavumu in South Kivu. The civilian had apparently apprehended a burglar and called the FARDC. When they showed up they tried to cut a deal with the thief rather than arrest him. The civilian protested, and was killed. The FARDC arrested the accused on May 11.

¶10. (SBU) Also on May 9, a FARDC patrol ten kilometers north of Uvira was apparently fired on by Mai Mai Zabuloni elements. There were no casualties (Comment: There are persistent reports that General Zabuloni's son has for weeks been leading a group of dissident Zabuloni elements in the area who are unwilling to

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integrate. End Comment).

¶11. (SBU) MONUC is investigating reports of warming relations between Mai Mai Yakutumba, FDLR and FRF, including a supposed meeting of elements of the three groups at Kiringi on May 9.

GARVELINK